

## PASTG News Notes - March 2001

### **Congratulations, Jean Sparks, MWA Secretary of the Year!**

Jean Sparks was announced as MWA Secretary of the Year on March 19, 2001. Jean serves as the secretary and personal assistant to the Research Leader of the Cropping Systems and Water Quality Research Unit in Columbia, Missouri. In addition to her exceptional service to her unit, she was a charter member of the PASTG and continues to serve as a mentor. Jean will be recognized for her accomplishments at Peoria in June.

### **A Commitment to Administrative Excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!**

The second MWA meeting for office support professionals will be held June 18-22, 2001, at Stoney Creek Inn, 101 Mariners Way, Peoria, Illinois. Additional information and agenda will be coming in the near future.

### **Meet Sue Shrout, Extramural Agreements Specialist**

The PASTG has decided to feature someone from the Area Office in each of our newsletters. Hopefully this will help all of us to better understand the role that person plays within the Area Office and also make us feel "more connected" to the people who serve us on a daily basis. This issue we are pleased to feature Sue Shrout, Extramural Agreements Specialist.

Sue started working for ARS in 1974 as a GS-2 file clerk, part-time, because there was a hiring freeze for permanent full-time (some things never change). In 1981, after a few details, she was reassigned to the accounting technician in the Budget & Fiscal Office. In 1985, Sue was promoted to the budget analyst position. In 1996, when the contract specialist handling the extramural agreements retired, the work was realigned into the Budget & Fiscal Office and Sue's position. The Area Budget & Fiscal Officer retired in 1997, and Sue said she applied for the position in 1998 with a lot of apprehension, and was promoted. In the beginning of 2000, the Extramural Agreements position under Sue's supervision became vacant. After a lot of soul searching, she weighed the pros and cons and made a decision to change her career ladder once more. Sue transferred into the Extramural Agreements position and remains a section head, now under the Area Administrative Officer. This move has proved to be the right decision, at this time, for both Sue's career and her family.

Sue has a little boy (Zachary) who just turned 9 years old, and two stepdaughters, Loren who is 25, and Lindsay who is 17. Her husband is an electrician and works for Johnson Controls, Inc. Paul works 2<sup>nd</sup> shift so they basically don't get to see each other until the weekends.

Sue's job as the area extramural agreements specialist consists of the responsibility of management oversight, administration, and execution of the Area's extramural research agreements. This includes a variety of competitive and noncompetitive awards such as the research support agreements, specific cooperative agreements, trust fund and reimbursable cooperative agreements, grants, assistance type cooperative agreements, and memorandums of understanding. She reviews and analyzes the proposed projects to ensure the appropriate award instrument is being used, based on the principle purpose of the research relationship. She negotiates with a wide variety of cooperators to make sure all legal and fiscal requirements

are met to protect the agency's interests.

Sue works on establishing a good rapport with the cooperators' contacts at the beginning of the negotiations to maintain a regular line of communication. This is important to the mutual understandings in the pre-award, administration, and post-award activities. Her contacts can vary in positions from grant specialists, accountants, principal investigators, department heads, program directors, all the way to industrial lawyers. Sue's main contact is first the LAOs, since all awards need to be routed thru their offices.

We wish to thank Sue for her time in providing this information and hope that those "in the field" find these "spot lights" interesting and helpful.

### **GroupWise Tips** by Paula Snell

Did you know that in GroupWise...

- ! you can send a message to an Internet user's address WITHOUT typing "Internet:" or "Mime:" before the address? (This was the prior format but not needed since the last version of GroupWise)
- ! you can view your documents on the first screen? Do this by:
  - " enlarging the mailbox by clicking on the bottom left corner, holding and dragging it out and down
  - " next, click on the icon at the top that shows a split screen and a pair of glasses
  - " when you highlight incoming messages, you can see it on the bottom half of the screen.
- ! you can right click on the date field and get different options than if you right click on the other field?
  - " One of the options is called Read Later. Select this option to re-highlight a document you want to come back to.
- ! you can change the order of or what is displayed on the Received screen or Address Book by moving objects around on the line above the Received Items or Addresses? For example,
  - " to display the most recent document at the top, right click on Date and select Sort Descending.
  - " to display different fields, point to the line above the received items or Address Book, right click. Select which column you want to add. (If the column is not displayed, click on More Columns which allows the addition of columns that are not displayed.)
  - " to rearrange the fields displayed, point to the field you want to move, hold down on the left mouse key and drag it to the spot on the line you want the field to go. (Don't let go of the left mouse key outside of the gray line or your column will be deleted—so now you know how to remove a column!)



- ! you can also change the way you look up addresses in the address book and make it different than how you type the address on the To line of a message?
  - " To sort on the Address Book by last name, go into the Address Book, move or add Last Name to the first column.
  - " Now when you address a message, the system displays last names when you start typing, but this isn't how you want it...go back into the address book and select View (at the top), then select Name Format, select the choice Show first name, then last name, select OK.
- ! you should add a password? Why?
  - " It prevents other people from reading your email unless you give them proxy rights.
  - " It allows you the ability to read your email through Web Access at [mail.mwa.ars.usda.gov](mailto:mail.mwa.ars.usda.gov).
  - " to add a password,
    - select Tools, Options, Security, Password. If you have never had a password, type one in, then type it second time for confirmation. (If it asks for an old password and you can't remember it, contact Paula Snell to remove it.)
    - You can put a check next to Remember my password and No password required with NDS...however, remember that if you do this, anyone coming to your PC can read your mail whether you are logged in to the network or not!
- ! you should check the Proxy Rights to Minimum User to make sure NOTHING is selected? Otherwise, EVERYONE can proxy to your mailbox without knowing the password!
  - " Select Tools, Options, Security, Proxy Access. In the Access list (about 1/3 way down this screen), highlight Minimum User Access and remove any checks on the bottom part of the screen under Access Rights.

**Sources of carbonless paper to use with Informs** from Georgetta Stonewall

One of the problems associated with using Informs software concerns needing the signature on multiple copies of the form. Christy Gibson at NCAUR with the help of Janae Lentz and others at NADC have solved our problem by finding a vendor for carbonless paper. The whole ream of paper is carbonless unlike other products we tried which were in sets of 2 or sets of 3. The following information is for your use although you might check with your local printing company as another source. Great for printing training forms, award forms, etc.

Acme Printing Co.  
66 Washington Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
Phone: 515-244-1723  
Fax: 515-244-0613  
POC: Mike Bruce, 1-877-475-1723

Description: NCR Stock, 8 ½ x 11", No Printing  
Body: 20# White NCR Bond CFB

1 box (10 reams) = \$206.00 The cost of purchasing only one ream possibly would be higher than purchasing a box at a time.

### **Mentor Program Training Session** by Sedina Lowe

Lori Wilson-Voss, Jean Sparks and Sedina Lowe met with Ann Houser from Columbus, OH, Vicki Jones and Jaci Weese from Ames, IA, in early February. We covered such items as Telephone Techniques, procedures for answering the telephone, screening, and routing incoming calls. We also covered Correspondence, using the correspondence handbook, routing procedures, and copies for office use and official use. Also discussed were Performance Appraisals, individual development plans (IDP), setting up Performance Standards - what is critical and what is not, and talked about the Midwest Area Policy on Awards and the Blue Book.

We worked in RMIS and had actual 115's to add into the system. We looked at 425's and 416/417's in RMIS and explained when these were needed and why. In discussing Travel, we talked about all the different arrangements to be made in order for someone to travel including travel authorization forms, airline tickets, hotels, car rentals, advanced funds, registrations fees, and vouchers for reimbursement upon the return of the traveler. Foreign travel was also covered since there are additional steps needed for approval. Timekeeping, RPES, and Procurement Requests were reviewed. There was a lot packed into a few days but the new folks know they can always call their mentor or another Administrative Support person in MWA to answer any questions.

### **Changing Faces in the MWA:**

#### **Sofia M. Basso**

Sofia went to work for the Department of Defense in Heidelberg, Germany (her husband was in the military for approximately 27 years) as a secretary in the Host Nations Agreements Section. As her husband's orders moved them around Europe and the United States quite a bit, she kept working on and off, accepting positions mostly in the clerical and secretarial fields. At the same time she volunteered her 'extra' time at various base schools, clinics, hospitals, fund raisers and held a variety of positions on committees. Upon her husband's retirement from the service and our subsequent move to Peoria (his hometown), she resigned from federal service. Her husband George's retirement lasted about 1 ½ years before he went back to work in town. What started out as a six month part-time position with ARS turned into a permanent one and Sofia has been in Peoria for about five years. She predominantly worked in the Procurement/Contracting Office during that time. In January 2001, Sofia was selected for the Purchasing Agent position at NCAUR. Sofia and George have one daughter, a hairdresser who lives in Peoria with her 11 year old son, and one son, who is a Captain in the Army, Chemical Corps, and is presently stationed at Fort Polk, LA, with his wife and 3 year old son.

#### **Ann Houser**

Ann Houser began working with the Soil Drainage Research Unit in Columbus, Ohio, in December 2000. She previously served as an Administrative Assistant/Office Manager at the University of Central Florida for 15 years. Ann is the mother of two beautiful daughters. Her hobbies include photography, computer graphics, mountain biking, and hiking.

## **Pamela Stewart**

Pam Stewart, is the newest member of the Administrative Support Team at the National Soil Tilth Laboratory in Ames. She and her husband, Michael, reside in Ames. She was the Office Manager for First Christian Church for 7½ years prior to coming to work for ARS. Prior to that, she was a self-employed cosmetologist for over 25 years. Mike is the Director of Environmental Services at Green Hills Retirement Community. He is also taking classes through DMACC. Pam and Mike have two grown sons, Shawn and Shane.

Shawn and his wife, Karen live in Cedar Rapids. Shawn does research for the University of Iowa Hospitals. Karen is a doctor and has a clinic in Cedar Rapids with several other doctors. Shawn and Karen are both graduates of Drake. Karen, also the University of IA.

Shane and his wife, Jeni live outside of Slater. They have two little boys. Brady is 5 years old and Blake is 1 year old. Shane, who is back in college and going for a teaching degree in math, is in construction. Jeni is a computer programmer. Both Shane and Jeni are graduates of ISU.

## **Helpful Websites:**

### **FORMS:**

ARS WordPerfect Forms:

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/divisions/hrd/hrdhomepage/wpforms.htm>

Paper and Electronic Forms:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/afm2/divisions/itd/ISB/Forms/forms.htm>

T&A Leave Audit Forms:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/afm/hrd/hrdhomepage/webforms/auditform.htm>

Electronic Library of GSA Standard and Optional Forms:

<http://hydra.gsa.gov/forms/>

## **Abbreviations for Canadian Provinces and Territories**

The following abbreviations are the proper ones to use for Canadian mail and for FedEx shipments. If you use either FedEx software or FedEx on-line and choose a Canadian destination, it may not let you leave the province field blank.

Alberta	AB
British Columbia	BC
Manitoba	MB
Newfoundland	NF
Northwest Territories	NT
Nova Scotia	NS
Ontario	ON
Prince Edward Island	PE
Quebec	PQ
Saskatchewan	SK
Yukon Territory	YT



## **Lost and Found**

Have you been searching in RMIS to find your 2000 Annual Reports to print an official copy? Well, in case this is something you need to do, here is a tip on how to find them:

- From the front screen, pick "Work 416-425-550-421"
- Then select "Active 416/417 425 550A 421"
- With your cursor on the project for which you wish to print the Annual Report, select "421 Questions."
- At the next screen, put your cursor on the "2000" report and select "Document Print."

In the event that you need to print the annual report for a **CRIS that has been terminated**, you will need to follow slightly different instructions:

- From the front screen, pick "Work 416-425-550-421"
- Then select "Active 416/417 425 550A 421"
- select "search" and make sure all fields are cleared (show a question mark) except your mode code.
- If you only want to display "daddy CRISs," place a "D" in the "project type" field. Likewise, you would put a "T" to show expired trusts, an "S" to show specifics, or an "R" to show reimbursables.
- Press "enter" to show a list of your projects.
- Put your cursor on the project for which you need to print the report.
  - To obtain annual reports through 1997, select "421 data."
  - To obtain annual reports from 1998 to present, select "421 questions."
- At the next screen, put your cursor on the year of the report you need and select "Document Print." This will print out the entire report for that year.

Unfortunately, it appears there is no slick way to "mark" several projects and print them all at once. You will need to select each project separately to see the annual reports for that particular project.

## **Newsletter Contributions:**

This newsletter is put together by the PASTG as a helpful tool for all Support Professionals. Anyone wishing to contribute an article to future issues of NewsNotes should contact any member of the PASTG.

*Creative thinking may mean simply the realization that there's no particular virtue in doing things the way they always have been done.*

— Rudolf Flesch